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Guardian

JULY 1999

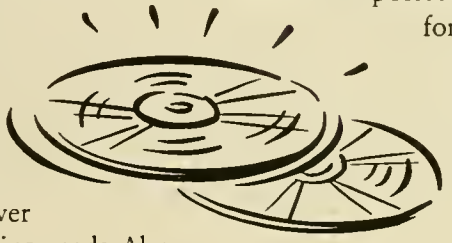
NEW CENTURY FINDS MIS BECOMING IT

In July, Management Information Services (MIS) took a step into the future and officially became known as Information Technology (IT). Why the change? It's the result of several things, explains Connie Brooks, IT Vice President.

First, the change is directly linked to the recent launch of PowerComp™. "When we launched our new system, we decreased our dependence on the old mainframe system," says Connie, which is what MIS was originally designed to support. "But with the new computer system, we are now moving almost entirely away from the mainframe, with everything supported in-house, which IT more accurately reflects."

Also, MIS was more focused on providing information to management to assist with business decisions. Now, IT is working in a State Fund-wide environment, providing support and services to all aspects of the business.

There are many new areas that IT will be heavily involved with as we move into the new century, Connie explains. "We will play a key role in planning for long range business needs, looking at new opportunities with data warehousing, and helping set up interactive and e-commerce opportunities for the State Fund and its agency partners. We have also moved to a client server environment and will be providing complete support for that. With PowerComp™ up and running, IT will work to complete and enhance the system to provide seamless service throughout the organization."



Most of us at the State Fund will notice few changes in the way Information Technology works. There will be some minor remodeling in the lower level to accommodate changing needs. Also,

Continued on page 4.

NEW LOGO UNVEILED

MONTANA STATE FUND

Montana State Fund's new logo was recently announced at the all-employee meeting. The logo is an important step in building our professional image—both internally and externally. As State Fund continues to function more as a private insurance company, we need a logo that sets us apart and projects the right image to our customers and potential customers—that State Fund is a leader in the workers' compensation insurance industry and customer service.

You will begin to see the logo more as forms and documents are reprinted. It will also appear on the macro letters you send out.

The new logo was designed by Wendt Advertising and Public Relations of Great Falls. Color versions are posted on each bulletin board for closer viewing.

We'd like to know what you think! So if you have any comments on the new logo, please call or e-mail Chuck Christansen.

Published monthly by and for the employees of the Montana State Fund.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last week, we all celebrated the successful launch of our new PowerComp™ system. After years of hard work, the new system was implemented and will provide State Fund with a solid foundation on which to grow and expand into the next century.

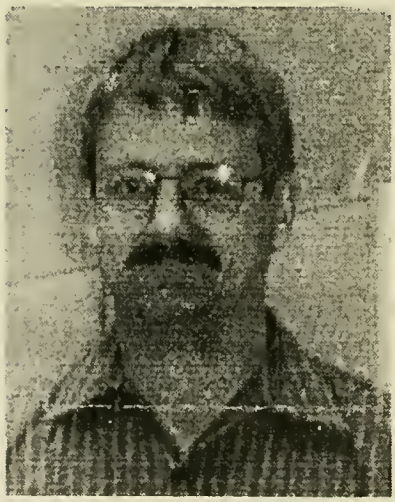
As I noted at last week's celebration, the successful launch was due to the tremendous efforts of many people, including staff from all departments and from our vendor, Information Engineering, LLP. My sincere thanks goes out to all of you.

However, now that PowerComp™ has been launched, we all must be extremely aware of the continuing levels of service we provide to our customers and partners. Already, as we anticipated, there have been several instances of minor problems surfacing due to the new systems launch. Please be on the lookout for other issues that may still arise and bring them to the immediate attention of your supervisor.

Over the past couple of years, our partners and customers have been eagerly waiting for our new computer system to bring both convenience and ease of doing business. Their expectations of the Montana State Fund were what prompted us to create and implement PowerComp™ in the first place, and we must continue our commitment to ensure this happens.

PowerComp™ will give us new tools to meet our service goals, such as the data warehouse project that is slated to come on line this fiscal year. I believe this new system will allow us to become a workers' compensation insurance company with customer service levels truly superior in the industry.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Congratulations to **Fred Lubke**, Maintenance Supervisor and the June Employee of the Month. Fred's co-workers say he is the most wanted man in the building—everyone wants him to fix something! And he does; always with a smile. This building is a big place to maintain and Fred literally knows every square inch of it—inside and out.

One co-worker comments, "Fred has the best internal customer service attitude I've seen at State Fund. He is respectful and promptly returns calls or shows up in person to fix the problem—usually the same day."

Fred is also extremely safety conscious and a leader in keeping State Fund a safe place to work. He is here before the sun clearing and sanding the sidewalks after it snows. He is a first responder and is involved in the community search and rescue team. As one co-worker points out, "I'm afraid to think of where we'd be without Fred!"

Thanks, Fred, for you hard work and commitment to State Fund!

KUDOS KOLUMN

While calling in a first report, a customer recently told the Customer Service Representative that he is very pleased with Montana State Fund and that we are doing a great job.

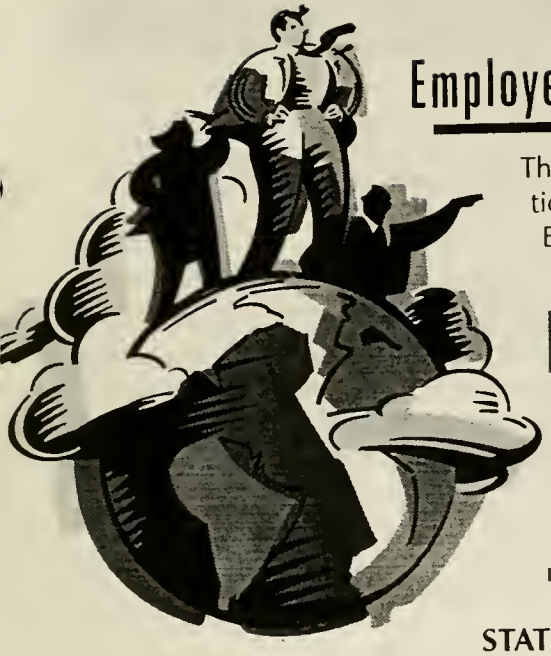
Dr. Denhartog, orthopedic surgeon from South Dakota was extremely impressed with the service he and his staff receive when they call the State Fund. He recently commented to **Mary Lynn Ramsey**, "I have never worked with a more efficient and customer focused agency in my life!"

Carol Dullum thanks **Inez Slayman** and **Phyllis McDonald** in imaging for promptly handling a request to search for a travel advance. They took the time to research and find the paperwork, even with all the backlog due to the PowerComp™ launch.

Kudos to **Holly Wood** who helped policyholder Jon Wigen of Hobson. He wrote a letter praising Holly's courtesy and helpfulness.

Marvin Kron, compliance coordinator for Western Energy Company, recently told Lisa Gates he is very impressed with CSU and the changes that have been made at State Fund over the last four years. He told her, "Your customer service is the reason I keep my policy with State Fund even though I'm solicited by other carriers. Keep up the good work!"

Thanks and great job to the SAC for all their hard work coordinating the summer picnic!



Employee Action Committee Update • July 1999

This Update highlights the Legal Department and HR & Communications Department recommendations that originated from the 1998 Employee Opinion Survey and the status of those recommendations.

Legal Department

Action: Implement the 1998 EAC recommendation for employee recognition.

Benefit: Increases morale, employee satisfaction, pride in employment and work product.

STATUS: Complete! In May of 1998 we started recognizing the Legal Employee of the Month and have provided a suggestion box for employees to submit ideas to the Vice President of Legal.

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Action: Provide and allow for more meaningful educational opportunities.

Benefit: Training, employee satisfaction, and opportunities for advancement.

STATUS: Complete! We have reviewed the State Fund training policy with employees and sought their ideas for training. Employees are encouraged to think creatively in developing FY00 developmental plans.

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Action: Develop a standard forms director and brief bank.

Benefit: Standardization of work product leaving the office and enhanced use of time.

STATUS: Complete! The IT department placed new folders on the legal directories for staff to place standard forms and research briefs and opinions. The staff has already placed new or old forms in the standard forms directory and the briefs/opinion directory.

HR & Communication Department

Action: Implement daily personnel reports from Med Pay Unit to CSU.

Benefit: Cross-department team building through better communication. Creates more effective distribution of calls for smoother operation.

STATUS: Complete and ongoing! A Med Pay employee contacts CSU each day to report on the personnel schedule.

Action: Offer new employees more time with Human Resources.

Benefit: New employees who are better informed and understand benefits, as well as the variety of forms they need to complete.

STATUS: Complete and ongoing! Human Resources schedules one hour with new employees on their first day and an additional hour, within an employees' first two weeks, to review the benefits packet. New employees are encouraged to read through the packet on their own and return to Human Resources with any additional questions. New employees also attend a training session within their first month of employment. The two hour session covers policies, procedures, and forms. This forum provides employees another opportunity to ask questions. Human Resources personnel are always available and will schedule any additional time an employee may need.

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Action: Allow employees to attend training that does not have a direct bearing on their current position.

Benefit: Ability to train for other positions within State Fund resulting in increased employee satisfaction, higher morale, and reduced turnover.

STATUS: Complete and ongoing! Human Resources continues to educate supervisors on our training policy. The policy states that a supervisor may approve a training request when the class has no direct bearing on the employees' current position when desired job performance is reached on existing job and cross training within the work unit has been accomplished to the satisfaction of management. The policy was discussed at the manager's quarterly meeting and at an executive staff meeting. The HR assistant will include a reminder with each weekly training opportunities e-mail, as well as include a notation on the monthly schedules posted in the break room and bulletin boards.

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Action: Reduce minimum attendee requirement for training classes.

Benefit: Fewer cancelled classes, more training opportunities for popular classes, increased employee satisfaction, higher morale, and reduced turnover.

STATUS: Complete and ongoing! The minimum attendance level for training has decreased from 15 to 10.

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Action: Conduct a teamwork survey of all State Fund supervisors and managers.

Benefit: Identify and address areas where teamwork between departments can be improved.

STATUS: The Employee Opinion Survey does include questions on teamwork and cooperation between and within departments. Rather than send out a separate survey, results from these questions on the FY00 survey will be closely evaluated. The FY00 Strategic Business Plan also focuses on improving internal customer service which directly impacts teamwork and cooperation between and within departments. Four Quality Customer Service training sessions are scheduled which will emphasize internal customer service. The trainer has discussed course content with the State Fund wide Employee Action Committee Chair.

BEST PRACTICES

By Morgan Hahn

Over the last couple of months we have received feedback regarding our Performance Planning and Review Program (PPRP). We received a copy of results of a questionnaire that had been distributed to all MPEA membership and gathered comments at the last manager's meeting. The most significant areas of concern that surfaced: timing of cycle, streamlining the mid-term review, and rating levels and terms. As a result of this feedback, a Task Force was formed to meet and discuss the PPRP program, as well as talk about whether there is a need for any modifications in the process or the forms used to document our employees' performance.

Neville Kenning, National Director State Compensation Fund Consulting, from the international consulting firm, Hay Management Consultants, was brought in to meet with the Task Force. Task Force members included Jack Stewart, Carol Morris, Jay Phillips, Morgan Hahn, Joanne Shydian, Frank Roccia, Marvin Kraft, Nance Hughes, Ben Jones, Tom Martello and Dan Gengler.

After meeting with the President/CEO, HR&C Vice President, and executive staff, Mr. Kenning met with the Task Force. He shared with us the standard "Best Practices" for performance management systems in our industry. The best practices are listed below:

- The performance management system is a process, not an event. That is to say, performance should be appraised by a supervisor year-around and planning, coaching and reviewing should be a part of this process.
- Coaching is to occur throughout the process.
- Focus on setting measurable and attainable performance commitments. (If you can't measure it, you can't manage it!)

Continued on page 4.

SIX DAYS AND SEVEN NIGHTS IN IT

The PowerComp™ launch brought endless days and nights of work for many staff in the IT Department. The eleven people heavily involved in the launch worked an average of 11.3 hours a day, seven days a week from June 12 through June 25. There are several people who deserve special recognition for the dedication and sacrifice they displayed.

Rod Wright: worked 30 consecutive hours
Bru Bizzoto: worked 20 hours in one day
Dave Ogan: worked 183 hours in one pay period
Jon Linder: solved the most problems and helped the most people during launch. Even while sleeping under his desk—affectionately named the bird cage—which might have something to do with all the paper and sunflower seed shells lining the floor.

The curious eating habits of the IT staff also came to light during launch.

Food Facts:
- 4 pounds of sunflower seeds (12 pounds of shells ended up on Jon Linder's floor)
- 115 gallons of soda
- coffee—we won't even go there
- 56 jumbo bags of chips
- 96 pop tarts were eaten in one 10 hour period (pop tarts!?)
- 4 pounds of popcorn was consumed in a 48 hour period.

Music:
Apparently, Jon Linder played Collective Soul for 108 consecutive hours. (Plans have been made to burn the CD along with the mainframe's program source code.)

TRAINING CALENDAR

Getting to Know Claim, part 1—August 9; 9-10

Getting to Know Admin & Finance, part 1—August 12; 9-10

Beginning Word—August 16, 17, 18; 1:30-4:30 each day

Quality Customer Service—August 23; 10-12

Intermediate Word—August 23, 24, 25; 1:30-4:30 each day

Work/Life Series, Alcohol and Drug Awareness—August 26; 8:30-10

Beginning PowerPoint—August 27; 9-12

Getting to Know IT—August 30; 9-10

Beginning Excel—August 30, 31; 9-12 each day

MSF Compensation Program—August 31; 9-11

HUMAN RESOURCES

Personnel changes as of July 30, 1999

New Hires

Steve Hutchins (Claim)

Departures

Brenda Rogelstad (IT)
Mark Karvelis (Underwriting)
Kathy Rowsey (Claim)
Mel Lockridge (Underwriting)

NEW EMPLOYEES

April Pulfrey joins the Claim Department as a field adjuster in Kalispell. April was a property and casualty adjuster for three years, as well as a workers' compensation adjuster for Compensation Adjusters. She earned a BA in journalism from University of Montana and holds an Associate in Claims designation. April's hometown is Missoula and she enjoys horseback riding, skiing, and reading.

JANITORIAL CONTRACT CHANGES

Montana State Fund has a new contract with Montana Janitorial Systems for building cleaning. Changes to the contract include: shampooing the entrances monthly; cleaning the break room refrigerator on the last Friday of each month; and emptying trash and ashtrays outside the building. The new provider will clean all work surfaces and desks on the last Friday of each month provided all materials are removed. The oak trim will be cleaned every month and all fabric partition walls will be vacuumed every six months. The contract will be monitored to ensure compliance with the requirements.

Please help us maintain the professional appearance of our building. If you notice any areas where cleaning can be improved, please contact Marvin Kraft (ext. 6505) or Fred Lubke (ext. 6402).

I'D LIKE TO KNOW. . . ANSWERS

We've received two questions/suggestions since the last issue of the *Guardian*. If you have a question or suggestion for a future issue, please send it to Chuck Christiansen in Customer Relations and Communications.

"I'd like to suggest a section in the Guardian or on the Intranet spotlighting a particular job or duty in different areas of the State Fund."

This is a good idea to help employees understand what their co-workers are doing and how every job at State Fund interacts. Watch for such articles in upcoming issues as space allows.

"Sometimes. staff working overtime bring their children to work with them. The kids are too loud and it makes it difficult for others to concentrate."

During the launch of PowerComp™, many employees put in overtime to ensure a successful implementation of our new system. Oftentimes, the only option these staff had was to bring their children with them. However, the PowerComp™ launch was an unusual circumstance and an exception was made to our usual practice of not bringing children to work. Now that the launch has been completed, we are returning to the understanding that employees should not bring their children with them to work.

Editor: Chuck Christiansen
Managing Editor: Shannon Copps
Employee Reporters:
Morgan Hahn Karen Wegner
Jay Phillips

Please call 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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Continued from page 1.

IT staff will reevaluate workflows in order to better support the new PowerComp™ system. One big change staff will notice will be expanded systems support – IT will have support staff on site 24 hours a day, five days a week. "We want to provide systems support to enhance maximum productivity time for our business units," says Connie.

Ultimately, a name is just a name, but some names are much more descriptive than others. Information Technology reflects just that. It's a name that describes an evolving department with more and different responsibilities, and an increasingly important role in a growing and changing organization. Let's all welcome IT to the State Fund family!

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Best Practices, continued from page 3.

- Alignment with organizational, departmental, team and individual goals.
- Focus on behavioral competencies as well as performance commitments (focus on the "how" as well as the "what").
- Effective performance management a joint responsibility; partnership between employee, manager (and peers).
- Focus on employee development as well as performance management (such as career aspirations and development plans).
- Emphasize open and honest feedback.
- Reward message needs to be consistent with the performance message.
- There needs to be top management commitment and practice.

Montana State Fund's performance management program already embraces these "Best Practices!" Though our program already incorporates much of the above, there's always room for improvement. Mr. Kenning will provide recommendations to the President/CEO in the weeks to come. Please call the HR&C Department if you have questions or comments, and watch for updates in The *Guardian*.